



# Doctoral Program Manual

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UNC  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK



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# DOCTORAL PROGRAM MANUAL

## BACKGROUND OF THE PROGRAM

AS A PROFESSION, social work has been one of the major institutions by which society has dealt with its most pressing social concerns. Applying theory, research methods, and evidence from both social work and the social and behavioral sciences, social work professionals have assumed critical leadership in analyzing personal and social needs and problems and in designing, implementing, and evaluating interventions to: “(a) enhance the problem-solving and coping capacities of people, (b) link people with systems that provide them with resources, services, and opportunities, (c) promote the effective and humane operation of these systems, and (d) contribute to the development and improvement of social policy.”

A critical need for the profession of social work is the ongoing development of its knowledge base for practice in order to expand its competence for addressing personal and social needs and for responding to changing social conditions. A knowledge base for practice rests on the integrated activities of constructing, testing, and refining theories, both explanatory theories of individual and collective behavior, and practice theories of producing individual and social change. For social work researchers, the practice setting provides the laboratory for developing, testing, and refining this theoretically-derived and empirically-validated knowledge base.

An increase in research and scholarly activity is needed to stimulate innovative practice interventions and to keep the profession responsive to shifting societal priorities and needs, changing social values, and new problems and complexities arising from changes in contemporary society. The knowledge-building component of the profession must address needs and problems that have been inadequately conceptualized or that have been either poorly addressed or not addressed at all.

The primary goal of the Doctoral Program at the School of Social Work is to produce social work scholars for careers in academic and research settings. These researchers will have the knowledge base and tools for planning and evaluating social interventions and for building and disseminating a body of tested theory. The doctoral program brings together a highly selected group of doctoral students and social work faculty to conduct basic and applied evaluative research into key human service issues. This cadre of professionals augments and supports existing social work resources at state and national levels by providing needed research and designing and evaluating innovative models of practice.

The Ph.D. Program at the School of Social Work at UNC-CH opened in 1993, and while evolving, has been devoted to the following goals and objectives:

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM

Graduates will be prepared to conduct a variety of theory construction and research activities that include:

- a) Building, testing, and refining both explanatory theory for understanding personal and social needs and problems, and practice theory for understanding change processes;
- b) Designing theoretically grounded social interventions;
- c) Assessing the effects of planned social interventions through process, outcome, and impact evaluations for purposes of testing and refining explanatory and/or practice theory.

Through providing education and research opportunities focused on expanding the frontiers of knowledge and addressing issues central to societal well-being, the program seeks to carry out the University's mandate to mold "carefully selected graduate students into scholars qualified and motivated to continue the pursuit of knowledge." It also extends in a significant manner the School's mission:

**The mission of the School of Social Work is to expand knowledge regarding social problems and programs, to educate social workers for advanced practice, and to provide leadership in the development of socially and economically just policies and programs that strengthen individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.**

## EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Students who complete the doctoral program will demonstrate:

- a) Understanding of the theoretical frameworks, history, philosophy, values, and research base in social work and social welfare that influence the analysis of personal and social needs and the practice of social intervention;
- b) Application of the theories, perspectives, and research methods of a social or behavioral science discipline to the analysis of personal and social needs and to the development, testing, and refinement of explanatory and practice theory within the student's specialized area of study;
- c) Understanding of the major theoretical, policy, and practice trends and issues in the student's specialized area of study, including attention to the specific issues affecting minority and disadvantaged groups and the identification of groups at risk;
- d) Mastery and application of the major theories, perspectives, and research methods in social work that inform the analysis of personal and social needs and the design of social intervention at each level of analysis within the student's specialized area of study;
- e) Competence in analyzing and addressing ethical and value issues and dilemmas faced by social work and social welfare researchers and practitioners in the analysis of personal and social needs and problems and in the practice of social intervention, particularly as they relate to the student's specialized area of study;
- f) Knowledge of the history, philosophy, and current organization of social work education and competence in the design, implementation, and evaluation of social work and social welfare curricula.

Students should demonstrate the following specific competencies:

- a) Ability to draw on explanatory theory to analyze the etiology and dynamics of social problems and social needs within the specialized area of study, and the characteristics and needs of social groupings that are the focus of concern;
- b) Ability to develop theoretically grounded research questions;
- c) Knowledge of and skill in using research tools for theoretically grounded inquiry for the design and evaluation of interventions within the specialized area of interest;
- d) Substantive knowledge about the range of interventive measures within the specialized area of interest;
- e) Ability to design and evaluate alternate and improved forms and methods of social work intervention as tests of theory;
- f) Ability to utilize results of research and evaluation to improve social interventions and to advance theory development.

## **SOCIAL INTERVENTION: THE ORGANIZING PERSPECTIVE OF THE PROGRAM**

Based on an analysis of the current status and trends in doctoral education in social work, an assessment of professional social work practice and community needs, and a review of faculty resources in the School of Social Work and across the university campus community, the school chose an explicit organizing perspective for guiding the development of its doctoral program, focusing student recruitment activities, and coordinating and developing faculty resources: social Intervention. Social intervention is defined as those policy, program, and direct practice interventions related to the "enhancement of social competency and functioning and/or the solutions to social problems" that affect the ability of people to meet life demands and realize their "potentialities for growth, health, and adaptive social functioning." This organizing perspective is distinguished by two features, each related to the primary theme of social intervention:

- a) An emphasis on theoretically grounded analysis of personal and social needs and problems and testing and elaborating theory through the evaluation of social interventions
- b) The recognition of the interdependency among levels of analysis and intervention in planning and implementing social interventions

Such an organizing perspective assumes the design of social interventions in accord with the mission and values of the social work profession. An important aspect of this mission is strengthening the level-of-fit between human needs and environmental and social resources and supports through empowerment and enablement within a value framework that respects the worth and dignity of all people and their need for self-direction.

In selecting social intervention as the doctoral program's organizing perspective, the faculty expresses its desire that the program encompass the entire field of social work and social welfare, whether at the level of policy, program, or direct practice. We have also chosen "social intervention" as our primary focus because of the paramount need in social work to advance empirically based theories of intervention, and because the evaluation of social interventions can be conducted in such a way to test both explanatory and practice theory. Social intervention provides a framework for inquiry in all fields of social work practice; it also expresses the conviction of the faculty that levels of intervention are interrelated and, cannot be viewed separately from one another. Although providing a definitive program perspective, this theme allows students considerable latitude in designing and tailoring programs of study that are responsive to their particular areas of interest.

# THE CURRICULUM

The curriculum leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work combines a core curriculum in social work and social welfare with outside coursework drawn from related disciplines, and includes thorough training in research methodology and data analysis. At the same time, the curriculum allows students reasonable flexibility in tailoring programs of study to their special area(s) of interest under the guidance of their doctoral advisors and committees. Maximizing the opportunity for students to use the rich multidisciplinary resources and research opportunities at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is a key feature of the doctoral program. Such an orientation assists in building a theoretical base and research expertise for formulating and testing explanatory and practice theory relevant to social intervention.

## PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The minimum curriculum includes ten courses in the School of Social Work, including eight core courses, the research practicum, the teaching seminar/practicum and the dissertation seminar, with additional elective courses the students must choose to accomplish other learning requirements. Students complete 45 credits of coursework (five semesters of three 3-credit courses each).

Students choose outside coursework and may guide the design of their research practicum to support their development in a specialized area of study. The specialized area can be a field of practice (such as family services, child welfare, aging, health, or mental health), a practice method (administration, community organization, group work, case management, or casework), or specific issues within either of these. Students may also combine a practice method and a field of practice for their specialized area, such as case management in mental retardation. In all components of the program, students use their assignments to further their scholarly inquiry, and to develop research questions and designs within the specialized area of study.

## REQUIRED CURRICULUM

<i>Category</i>	<i>Requirements</i>
<b>Social Work Courses</b>	Completion of 45 credit hours prior to advancing to candidacy: SoWo 900 Conceptualizing Social Problems to Inform Interventions SoWo 910 Research Methods in Social Interventions SoWo 911 Social Statistics and Data Analysis (unless exempted) SoWo 912 Research Practicum I SoWo 913 Advanced Research Methods in Social Intervention SoWo 914 Measurement in Social Intervention Research SoWo 915 Research Practicum II SoWo 916 SEM SoWo 917 Longitudinal and Multilevel Data Analysis SoWo 918 Multiple Regression Analysis SoWo 919 Qualitative Analysis SoWo 919 Propensity Score Analysis SoWo 940 Development of Social Intervention Models SoWo 941 Teaching Seminar/Practicum
<b>Courses Outside Social Work</b>	Three or more outside courses, two of which are substantive.
<b>Electives</b>	Students may add as many electives as they wish.
<b>Minimum Required Statistics Courses</b>	Two advanced statistics courses for all students (above basic level).
<b>Qualifying Paper/ Dissertation Proposal Seminar</b> (Adv Res Meth in Social Intervention / SOWO 913)	Usually taken in student's fifth semester after two year residency requirement has been fulfilled, and required courses have been completed; student registers for SoWo 913.
<b>Dissertation</b>	Once students have completed all required course work, they may enroll in SOWO 994 for 3 dissertation credits

## ELECTIVES

Students may select elective courses from within the School of Social Work or from other departments and professional schools within the university community. The intent of electives is to add to the student's substantive and methodological expertise needed for completing the dissertation.

Elective courses may include an independent study. The independent study should be designed to permit the student to do one or more of the following:

- a) Explore broadly within an area of interest in order to define the specialized area of study;
- b) Review the literature in depth within a defined specialized area of study;
- c) Conduct some other type of focused inquiry within the specialized area of study that moves the student toward the dissertation.

Students who wish to do an independent study elective must obtain and complete the planning form in the school or department in which they are taking the independent study and file it with the Doctoral Program.

## RESEARCH PRACTICUM

The *Research Practicum* is three credit hours, which translates into 12 contact hours per week in one semester. Typically, students complete this course in the fourth semester of course work; they should have completed the first three semesters of the doctoral program before beginning the *Research Practicum*. If students develop a research practicum in conjunction with a research assistantship for which they are being paid, they are expected to spend twelve non-paid hours per week on the research practicum. With appropriate approval, students may tailor this practicum to their capacities and career goals, but they may not exempt it.

The intent of the *Research Practicum* is to prepare graduates for research performance and productivity. Students learn and practice the skills involved in various phases of the research process, first through apprenticeships to experienced researchers and later by initiating their own projects. These skills include development of research questions and methods; analysis and interpretation of data; application of findings; proposal writing; and preparation of scholarly publications. Potential settings include faculty research projects, agency-based projects, and university-community collaborations. Methods may be qualitative or quantitative or both. Possible projects include instrument development, secondary analysis of data, community needs assessment, program evaluation, and large-scale surveys. Preparation of a literature review alone is not a sufficient research practicum project. Students are responsible for ethical conduct of research, as elaborated in the Graduate School Handbook (<http://handbook.unc.edu/phd.html>). Unless there is prior sanction for a project, all students must secure approval from the University Institutional Review Board *before* initiating a practicum dealing with human subjects.

Students document the process and their findings in a final product, which may include a manuscript – or a substantial portion of a manuscript (such as the methods or results section) – for publication, or in another suitable format approved by the research practicum Advisor.

## Research Practicum Objectives

When developing their research practicum proposals, students clarify how they will use the opportunity to achieve some of the following objectives:

- a) Build skills for research on social interventions;
- b) Develop competencies for initiating and carrying out agency-based research in a mode of collaboration with practitioners;
- c) Carry out developmental or preparatory steps of the dissertation project;
- d) Add to their understanding of the complete research process;
- e) Develop skills in writing for publication and presenting in professional forums

Students will achieve these objectives through engaging in some or all of the following activities in connection with an original or an existing research project:

- a) Collaborate with other researchers and/or practitioners in the design and implementation of the research project;
- b) Formulate research questions of theoretical and practical significance;
- c) Design the overall research strategy for answering the research questions;
- d) Develop appropriate data collection strategies;
- e) Plan the data analysis;
- f) Consider issues of diversity and discrimination in formulating the research questions and designing the study;
- g) Describe the planned study in a complete research proposal;
- h) Carry out the proposed data collection and analysis;
- i) Interpret findings and discuss their implications for theory and practice;
- j) Write up findings in one or more publishable articles.

The student should talk with the faculty about possible sites for the practicum and the breadth, depth, and type of research experience needed based on prior training and experience and career goals.

## **Guidelines**

### **Timing and Prerequisites for the Research Practicum**

Under normal circumstances, students will complete the research practicum in the fourth semester of coursework. While we will consider other reasonable plans, we encourage following this sequence in order to gain the benefits of peer interaction, and integration with coursework.

Students should have completed the first three semesters of the doctoral program before beginning the research practicum.

Prerequisites:

SoWo 900 Conceptualizing Social Problems to Inform Interventions

SoWo 910 Research Methods in Social Interventions

SoWo 911 Social Statistics and Data Analysis (unless exempted)

SoWo 914 Measurement in Social Intervention Research

SoWo 918 Regression and other data analysis courses

SoWo 919 Qualitative Analysis

### **Credit Hours and Contact Hours**

The research practicum is 3 credit hours, which translates into 12 contact hours per week for three credit hours in one semester.

### **Types of Research Practica**

The specific character of the research practicum should depend on the student's background and training needs, career objectives, the availability of suitable research projects, and special conditions at the time the internship is undertaken. For students with prior research experience, the research practicum should provide for an expansion of research skills into new areas and/or a deepening of pre-existing skills.

### **Possible Settings**

- Individual faculty research projects, especially university-community collaborations
- Agency based projects

If students develop their research practicum in conjunction with a research assistantship for which they are being paid, they are still expected to spend twelve non-paid hours per week on the research practicum.

## Possible Types of Projects

Methods used in the practicum may be qualitative or quantitative, or a combination of both. Examples of possible types of projects include:

Instrument Development	Participant Observation in an Agency or Community
Secondary Analysis of Qualitative or Quantitative Data	Qualitative Data Collection Regarding a Specific Intervention
Community Needs Assessments	Focus Groups as a Needs Assessment or Project Planning Tool
Program Evaluation Design and/or Execution	Ethnographic Interviews
Large Scale Surveys	

Students will initiate contact and negotiate the research practicum with their practicum supervisor in accordance with program criteria. Using the appropriate form (U:\Groups\Doctoral\Forms\Forms), students will submit a brief proposal which should include:

- ◆ Identification of the research problem
- ◆ The research activities the student will engage in
- ◆ Methodological procedures to be employed
- ◆ Anticipated product - including specification of the article title and journal to which the student might submit an article, which can be co-authored (if final product is an article)
- ◆ A discussion of how the proposed project meets the criteria and achieves the objectives for the research practicum

The supervising faculty member or on-site supervisor (if this person is not the supervising faculty member) must approve the written proposal before the student may register for this course. The supervising faculty member and/or on-site research supervisor, and the student, sign the Research Practicum Agreement, keep copies, and give a copy to the Doctoral Program Coordinator for the student's file.

## **Supervision and Evaluation**

The student, with faculty advisor, will identify an experienced researcher to supervise the practicum.

The responsibilities of the practicum supervisor are to: (1) review and approve the proposal; (2) meet regularly to review progress; and (3) evaluate the work in process or completed. The practicum supervisor will meet with the student as needed, to assess progress and congruence of the actual work with practicum criteria and objectives and the student's own learning objectives. The grade will be assigned by the practicum supervisor.

## **Guidelines for Intellectual Ownership**

Students should discuss and negotiate intellectual ownership, that is, who controls and whose name is on, any published products from the research practicum. A statement regarding the outcome of this discussion should be included in the proposal for the practicum.

## **Human Subjects Requirements**

In situations in which students are dealing directly with human subjects, they will need to secure Institutional Review Board clearance of their project, unless it is part of a larger project which already has IRB approval. IRB approval should be secured during the semester prior to initiating the practicum.

## **COMPETENCE IN RESEARCH METHODS AND ANALYSIS**

Students should build and demonstrate statistical and/or data analysis competence. This competence involves a working knowledge of descriptive and inferential statistics for social work research appropriate to each student's specialized area of study.

All students are expected to achieve basic competence in using both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis, an understanding of the appropriate applications of each method, and an advanced level of expertise in one or the other. To develop this competence, students are required to take two advanced statistics courses and one qualitative methods course. Students are **strongly encouraged** to take two or more additional advanced statistical courses and most do.

Before the first year of study, students wishing to exempt the first level statistics course (SoWo 911) should discuss this with the SoWo 911 instructor and complete an exemption form. (U:\GROUPS\Doctoral\Forms\Coursework)

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

## SoWo 900: CONCEPTUALIZING SOCIAL PROBLEMS TO INFORM INTERVENTIONS

### Course Description:

An application and critical analysis of behavioral and social science theories and theory-driven research for understanding the etiology of social problems for purposes of social intervention.

### Objectives:

Students completing this course will be able to:

- a) Describe the history and evolution of research in the behavioral and social sciences;
- b) Understand the application of the scientific process to social work research and practice, including the role of research and theory in evidence-based social work practice;
- c) Understand the reciprocal and dynamic links among theory, research, and practice;
- d) Understand distinctions among theories at different levels of abstractness and scope, as well as the distinction between explanatory theories and practice theories;
- e) Review specific examples of the use of conceptual frameworks for informing the development of explanatory substantive models for understanding social problems, and how these substantive models inform the development of social interventions;
- f) Identify a specific social problem, describe its incidence/prevalence and significance for social work intervention, and identify and critique relevant conceptual frameworks and substantive models that have been used to frame and inform understanding of the problem (explanatory theories);
- g) Understand the development and application of theories in the context of race, ethnicity, gender, age socioeconomic status, and sociocultural and historical context.

Prerequisites: None

# SoWo 910: RESEARCH METHODS IN SOCIAL INTERVENTION

*(Update 9-10-10)*

## Course Description:

This course provides an introduction to basic research processes and methods for use in planning, implementing, evaluating, and improving social interventions. Topics include outcomes monitoring, problem formulation, assessment, measurement, research review, human subjects' protection, evaluation design, data analysis, and the application of findings to practice improvement and theory refinement.

## Course Objectives:

This course affords students an opportunity to gain knowledge about the following issues in social intervention research:

- The need for broadly inclusive processes to plan, implement, and evaluate social interventions, and how researchers' approaches to these processes can facilitate or impede research
- The quantitative-comparative experimental (counterfactual) paradigm that currently prevails in social intervention research;
- How various policy and implementation constraints often necessitate the use of designs other than fully randomized experiments;
- Special legal and ethical issues pertaining to the protection of human subjects; and
- The need for culturally aware social intervention research that is responsive to the diversity of community values and preferences.

Students taking the course will be able to:

- develop “well-built” research questions for estimating the causal impact of social interventions on desired outcomes for target populations;
- develop conceptual models to support proposed social interventions and explicate underlying theories of change;
- assess the validity and reliability of alternative qualitative and quantitative measures of constructs in conceptual models that guide social intervention research;
- understand basic aspects of data analysis, sample design and statistical power analysis;
- critically evaluate various experimental, quasi-experimental, and non-experimental research designs by identifying various threats to the validity of each design;
- and prepare an application for IRB approval of human subjects research.

Recommended Prerequisites:

SoWo 102 or equivalent  
SoWo 292 or equivalent

# SoWo 911: SOCIAL STATISTICS AND DATA ANALYSIS

## Course Description:

This course is designed to explore basic principles and to provide advanced instruction in data analysis, including the construction and analysis of tables, statistical tests, and introduction to the use of computer programs.

## Objectives:

At the completion of SoWo 911, students will be able to:

- a) Use STATA computing software package to create, manage, and analyze data relevant to social behavioral research;
- b) Have a solid understanding of normal distribution, and apply it to inference of population mean by conducting univariate z test and t test;
- c) Know how to develop research hypothesis, and convert such hypothesis into a null hypothesis to conduct tests on statistical significance; understand type I and II errors and factors affecting statistical power;
- d) Understand the central limit theorem and other sampling theories, and the application of this knowledge to assessing strengths and limitations of probability and non probability samples commonly found in social behavioral research;
- e) Understand chi-square distribution and apply it to analysis of contingency table involving two or more categorical variables;
- f) Understand correlation and apply it to evaluation of associations between continuous variables;
- g) Know how to perform independent sample t test, paired t test, one-way between subject analysis of variance (ANOVA), one-way within-subject ANOVA, and two-factor ANOVA to answer research questions relevant to social behavioral data;
- h) Know how to interpret results of statistical analysis, and communicate findings to general audiences clearly and effectively in writing;
- i) Have general knowledge about non-normal distributions (Bernoulli, binomial, exponential and exponential family, and multinomial) to get ready for learning advanced statistics courses;
- j) Have general knowledge about matrix algebra to get ready for learning advanced statistics courses.

## SoWo 912: RESEARCH PRACTICUM

### Course Description:

Students develop independent research competence through work on a research project under the direction of an experienced researcher.

Objectives: Students will utilize the research practicum to:

- a) Build skills for research on social interventions;
- b) Develop competencies for initiating and carrying out agency based research in a mode of collaboration with practitioners;
- c) Carry out developmental or preparatory steps of the dissertation project;
- d) Add to their understanding of the complete research process;
- e) Develop skills in writing for publication and presenting in professional forums;

In connection with an original or an existing research project, students will carry out selected steps of the following research process, plan others, and critique those already completed:

- f) Collaborate with other researchers and practitioners in the design and implementation of the research project;
- g) Formulate research questions of practical and theoretical significance;
- h) Design the overall research strategy for answering the research questions;
- i) Develop appropriate data collection strategies;
- j) Plan the data analysis;
- k) Consider issues of diversity and discrimination into the research in formulating the research questions and designing the study;
- l) Describe the planned study in a complete research proposal;
- m) Carry out the proposed data collection and analysis;
- n) Interpret findings and discuss their implications for theory and practice;
- o) Write up findings in one or more publishable articles.

### Prerequisites:

SoWo 900 Conceptualizing Social Problems to Inform Interventions  
SoWo 910 Research Methods in Social Interventions  
SoWo 911 Social Statistics and Data Analysis (unless exempted)  
SoWo 914 Measurement in Social Intervention Research  
Other research and data analysis courses

## SoWo 913: ADVANCED RESEARCH METHODS IN SOCIAL INTERVENTION

### Course Description:

Students build advanced competence in research design, data collection, and data analysis and statistics by analyzing exemplary social work research and presenting independent learning projects within specialized areas of study.

### Expanded Course Description:

Students develop a draft dissertation proposal and an outline of the doctoral qualifying paper, completing independent learning projects that build substantive, theoretical, and methodological knowledge appropriate for their specialized areas of study.

### Objectives:

By course end, students will be able to:

- a) Describe the stages of social research with particular emphasis on formulation of the research problem and an advanced research design.
- b) Describe critically the major conceptual frameworks, substantive theories, and research designs that inform the specialized area of study.
- c) Describe issues in study populations, sampling strategies and potential for generalization of findings in research in the specialized area of study.
- d) Identify ethical issues and dilemmas that pertain to conducting and reporting scholarly research in their specialized area of study, including human subject considerations.

### Prerequisites:

SoWo 900 Conceptualizing Social Problems to Inform Interventions

SoWo 910 Research Methods in Social Intervention

SoWo 911 Social Statistics and Data Analysis, or equivalent

SoWo 914 Measurement in Social Intervention Research

SoWo 940 Development of Social Intervention Models

**SoWo 914:**  
**MEASUREMENT IN SOCIAL INTERVENTION RESEARCH**  
*(Update 9-10-10)*

Course Description:

This course focuses on the development of knowledge and skill in measuring social, psychological, environmental, and other factors related to intervention with individuals, families, groups, and organizations.

Course Goal:

Students will develop an understanding of qualitative and quantitative measurement strategies and issues.

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Describe the theoretical, conceptual, and methodological foundations of qualitative and quantitative measurement;
2. Develop and test theory-based scales, starting from a theoretically and empirically justified item pool;
3. Conduct cognitive testing of potential scale items with representatives of an appropriate target audience and analyze the data;
4. Conduct exploratory factor analysis using one or more basic statistics programs to identify and evaluate the factor structure of scales;
5. Conduct confirmatory factor analysis to further support the validity of scales, and understand the implications of data characteristics on the choice of software and analysis strategies
6. Evaluate the reliability and validity of quantitative indices and scales;
7. Apply principles of measurement to research that involves issues of difference arising from culture, ethnicity, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, and other aspects of human diversity.

Required Texts/Readings

DeVellis, R. F. (2003). *Scale development: Theory and applications* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Pett, M. A., Lackey, N. R., Sullivan, J. J. (2003). *Making sense of factor analysis*. Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.

Additional assigned readings are available through the course Blackboard site or electronic journals.

Prerequisite:

SoWo 911 Social Statistics and Data Analysis, or permission from instructor.

**SoWo 915:  
RESEARCH PRACTICUM II**

In rare cases, if they choose, students may register for a second research practicum.

# SoWo 916

## STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING

### Course Description:

This course was originally developed by Dr. Shenyang Guo. We will make use of much his syllabus, materials, and assignments throughout the semester.

*Structural equation modeling* (SEM) is a general statistical method that can be employed to test theoretically derived models. It is —a class of methodologies that seeks to represent hypotheses about the means, variances, and covariances of observed data in terms of a smaller number of ‘structural’ parameters defined by a hypothesized underlying model|| (Kaplan, 2000). In this course, students will learn fundamental concepts and skills to conduct SEM, and know how to apply these techniques to social work research.

### Course Objectives:

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Understand the fundamental hypothesis of SEM and its relationship to the specification, identification, and estimation of a structural equation model;
- Run path analysis and test mediating hypotheses using SEM;
- Conduct confirmatory factor analysis to evaluate measurement validity;
- Conduct structural equations with latent variables and apply the method to test/confirm a theoretically derived model;
- Understand statistical indices measuring goodness-of-fit of a model;
- Conduct multiple group comparisons with SEM to test moderating effects;
- Perform power analysis with SEM and know how to determine minimum sample size needed\*;
- Understand basic concepts and skills to deal with interactions and quadratics in latent variables, and categorical variables\*;
- Understand the linkage between SEM and hierarchical linear models, and conduct multilevel analysis and latent growth curve analysis with SEM;
- Understand strategies dealing with missing data.

\*We will examine these concepts only if time allows.

### Prerequisites:

Students are assumed to be familiar with descriptive and inferential statistics. A solid understanding of multiple regression analysis is a key. They should have statistical and statistical software background at least equivalent to that provided by SOWO919 (applied regression analysis and generalized linear models), SOCI209, PSYC282, EDUC284 (linear regression), or SOCI211 (categorical data analysis).

# SoWo 917: LONGITUDINAL AND MULTILEVEL ANALYSIS

*(Update 7-18-11)*

## Course Description:

This course introduces statistical frameworks, analytical tools, and social behavioral applications of three types of models: event history analysis, hierarchical linear modeling (HLM), and growth curve analysis.

## Course Objectives:

At the completion of the course, students will have a solid understanding of the challenges and problems in longitudinal and multilevel analysis. They will know how to choose appropriate statistical analyses that best suit the type of data and research questions for a given study. They are expected to be able to run, interpret, and communicate results clearly and effectively in writing based on the following models: life tables, Kaplan-Meier's estimate of survivor function, discrete time model, Cox proportional hazard model, marginal models handling multilevel event data, two-level and three-level hierarchical linear models, growth curve analysis, and analysis of a categorical dependent variable using HGLM.

## Prerequisites:

Students are assumed to be familiar with descriptive and inferential statistics as well as multiple regression analysis. They should have statistical and statistical software background at least equivalent to that provided by SOCI209, PSYC282, EDUC284 (linear regression), or SOCI211 (categorical data analysis). Students without such prerequisites should contact the instructor to determine their eligibility to take this course.

# SOWO 918: APPLIED REGRESSION ANALYSIS AND GENERALIZED LINEAR MODELS

## Course Description:

This course introduces statistical frameworks, analytical tools, and social behavioral applications of OLS regression model, weighted least-square regression, logistic regression models, and generalized linear models.

## Course Objectives:

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the type and nature of research questions and data that are suitable for regression analysis;
2. Use Stata computing software package to manage and analyze data with the OLS regression model;
3. Understand the Gauss-Markov theorem and the BLUE property of OLS, especially conditions under which BLUE does not hold;
4. Have a solid understanding of the five assumptions embedded in the OLS regression;
5. Know how to conduct statistical tests detecting violations of OLS assumptions (i.e., multicollinearity, heteroskedasticity, influential data and outliers, etc.);
6. Know how to take remedial measures if harmful violations exist (i.e., weighted least-squares regression, etc.);
7. Understand the type and nature of research questions and data that are suitable for the generalized linear models;
8. Have a solid understanding of basic concepts of categorical data (i.e., odds ratio, relative risk, marginal probability, and conditional probability);
9. Use Stata computing software package to manage and analyze data with the binary, ordered, and multinomial logistic regressions;
10. Know how to interpret results of regression analysis and logistic regression analysis, and communicate findings to general audiences clearly and effectively in writing;
11. Understand limitations of the regression and logistic regression models, and common pitfalls in using these models;
12. Understand the basics of conducting a Monte Carlo study.

## Prerequisite:

Students are assumed to be familiar with descriptive and inferential statistics. They should have statistical and statistical software background at least equivalent to that provided by SOWO 911. Students without such prerequisites should contact the instructor to determine their eligibility to take the course.

# SoWo 919: ADVANCED TOPICS IN CAUSAL INFERENCE: PROPENSITY SCORE AND RELATED MODELS

*(Update 8-20-11)*

## Course Description:

This course focuses on advanced topics in causal inference by reviewing four recent methods developed for observational studies and evaluation of quasi-experimental programs.

## Course Objectives:

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand challenges posted by evaluation of quasi-experimental or observational data, contexts under which randomized experiments are infeasible, unethical, and expensive, and the importance of taking remedial strategies within such contexts;
2. Understand differences, debates, and similarities between statistical and econometric traditions in developing analytical strategies to overcome challenges posted by quasi-experimental and observational data;
3. Have a solid understanding of the Neyman-Rubin's counterfactual framework and two fundamental assumptions: the strongly ignorable treatment assignment, and the stable unit treatment value. Understand Heckman's critiques to the counterfactual framework and main features of the Heckman's scientific model of causality;
4. Understand the main features of Heckman's sample selection and related models, and know how to implement the analysis with Stata;
5. Understand the main features of propensity-score greedy matching and related models, and know how to implement the analysis with Stata;
6. Understand the main features of propensity-score optimal matching and related models, and know how to implement the analysis with Stata and R;
7. Understand the main features of matching estimators, and know how to implement the analysis with Stata;
8. Understand the main features of kernel-based matching and related models, and know how to implement the analysis with Stata;
9. Understand the main features of Rosenbaum's sensitivity analysis to evaluate potential bias due to hidden selection, and know how to implement the analysis with Stata;
10. Know how to read, evaluate, and criticize evaluation studies.

## Prerequisite:

Students are assumed to be familiar with descriptive and inferential statistics. They should have statistical and statistical software background at least equivalent to that provided by SOWO 919 "Applied Regression Analysis and Generalized Linear Models". Students without such prerequisites should contact the instructor to

## SOWO 919 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

### Course Objectives:

The student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

1. Distinguish qualitative research from other research paradigms and understand the utility of qualitative research methods in intervention research;
2. Define fundamental concepts of qualitative research including: interpretation, participant meaning, and context;
3. Understand sampling and recruitment of participants and the ethical issues involved in qualitative research with vulnerable participants;
4. Apply basic methods of study design, instrument development, data collection and data analysis, and writing qualitative research reports; and
5. Understand rigor in qualitative research methods and critically appraise the rigor of qualitative research studies.

### Expanded Description:

The objective of this course is to provide an overview of the fundamentals of the use of qualitative research, particularly as it applies to intervention research. The focus of this class is on the development of skills used by qualitative researchers. Particular attention will also be paid to developing skill in the evaluation of qualitative research methods, designing rigorous, high quality studies, and the protection of vulnerable research participants in qualitative studies.

# SoWo 940: DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL INTERVENTION MODELS

*(Update 8-16-10)*

## Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to prepare advanced graduate students to design and evaluate interventions that address social needs, problems, and conditions.

## Course Objectives:

Students completing this course will be able to:

1. Identify and assess the socio-political dynamics involved in defining a specific social need, problem, or condition at the societal and institutional, organizational, familial and interpersonal, and individual levels;
2. Analyze a social need, problem, or condition relevant to a particular population and identify the implications of different levels and kinds of analysis for designing appropriate interventions;
3. Assess the theoretical and empirical support for alternative interventions that address a selected need, problem, or condition with a particular population;
4. Describe and critically assess a logical sequence of development that guides the design, implementation, and evaluation of social interventions;
5. Apply a systematic approach to designing a social intervention that is responsive to a selected social need, problem, or condition of a particular population;
6. Select and apply appropriate research methodology in evaluating a social intervention;
7. Demonstrate awareness of the interplay of different levels of intervention and moderators such as age, class, culture, disability status, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, and sexual preference in designing, implementing, and evaluating a social intervention;
8. Generate hypotheses for guiding empirical inquiry for testing social interventions;
9. Apply theory construction strategies and techniques for building social interventions;
10. Delineate effective strategies for collaboration between academic and practice communities in designing, implementing, and evaluating social interventions.

Prerequisites: *(may be waived by permission of the instructor)*

SoWo 900 Conceptualizing Social Problems to Inform Interventions

SoWo 910 Research Methods in Social Interventions

SoWo 911 Social Statistics and Data Analysis (unless exempted)

SoWo 914 Measurement in Social Intervention Research

# SOWO 941: TEACHING SEMINAR/PRACTICUM

*(Update 8-16-10)*

The Teaching Seminar/Practicum (SoWo 941, 3 credit hours.) is required of all Ph.D. students except those with substantial teaching experience. Students will receive a total of three (3) semester hours of credit.

## Course Description:

This practicum provides a range of supervised classroom opportunities and seminars designed to prepare doctoral students for teaching in social work education.

## Purpose:

The goal of this practicum is to familiarize aspiring professors with evidence based practices for instructional design and delivery in social work education. Students achieve this goal through a supervised learning experience with a teaching mentor and seminars on syllabus construction, learning objectives, instructional methodologies, strategies for evaluating student performance, and managing sensitive issues in the classroom. The seminars will also provide an opportunity for students to discuss their progress in the practicum and receive feedback from their peers and the instructor.

**Objectives:** At the conclusion of this course, students should be able demonstrate the following at beginning levels:

- Knowledge of the history, philosophy, mission, organization, and curricular linkages of social work education at the B.S.W. and M.S.W. levels
- An awareness of one's preferred teaching style and knowledge of how to adapt teaching to the learning styles of students.
- The ability to design instructional activities (e.g. lecture, discussion, exercises, etc.) that help students gain understanding, knowledge, and/or skills in a particular area of social work.
- The ability to implement these instructional activities and various educational methods in ways that facilitate, enhance, and amplify students' learning and skill development.
- A developing competence in the design, implementation, and grading of student evaluation methods for social work (e.g., papers, tests, presentations).
- An ability to assess and critique their own and their colleagues' teaching style, instructional methods, and general strengths and weaknesses as a social work instructor.

## **Exemptions:**

A student who has taught at least two courses in an accredited school of social work (BSW or MSW level) in the five years preceding their matriculation as a Ph.D. student in social work, may request an exemption from Social Work 941 (Teaching Seminar/Practicum) by completing a course exemption form.

SOWO 994:  
DOCTORAL DISSERTATION CREDIT

In semesters subsequent to the dissertation seminar, students continue to register for SOWO 994 for a variable number of credits in order to retain their status as full time students.

**\*\*STUDENTS MUST BE REGISTERED IN THE SEMESTERS THAT THEY DEFEND THEIR QUALIFYING PAPER, DISSERTATION PROPOSAL, AND FINAL DISSERTATION\*\***



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Admission \_\_\_\_\_ Expected Graduation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Summary of Doctoral Program Requirements**

**SSW Doctoral Courses (completion of 45 credit hours prior to advancing to candidacy):**

- \*SOWO 900 Conceptualizing Social Problems to Inform Interventions (3 credit hours)
- \*SOWO 910 Research Methods in Social Interventions (3 credit hours)
- \*SOWO 911 Social Statistics and Data Analysis (3 credit hours)
- \*SOWO 912 Research Practicum I (3 credit hours)
- \*SOWO 913 Advanced Research Methods in Social Intervention (3 credit hours)
- \*SOWO 914 Measurement in Social Intervention Research (3 credit hours)
- SOWO 915 Research Practicum II (3 credit hours)
- SOWO 916 SEM (3 credit hours)
- SOWO 917 Longitudinal and Multilevel Data Analysis (3 credit hours)
- \*SOWO 918 Multiple Regression Analysis (3 credit hours)
- \*SOWO 919 Qualitative Analysis (3 credit hours)
- SOWO 919 Propensity Score Analysis (3 credit hours)
- \*SOWO 940 Development of Social Intervention Models (3 credit hours)
- \*SOWO 941 Teaching Seminar/ Practicum (3 credit hours)

3 courses taken outside the School of Social Work (total of 9 credit hours - 2 of these must be substantive / theory courses)

2 advanced methods courses after completing SOWO 918 (6 credit hours - may be taken in SSW or outside)

*\*Required courses*

**Additional Guidelines:**

- Once students have completed all required course work, they may enroll in SOWO 994 for 3 dissertation credits.
- Students must have completed all course work (including incompletes) before they will be allowed to defend their qualifying paper.
- Students are required to complete their qualifying paper and the oral defense of the paper in the semester following completion of coursework. Students who do not meet this deadline, will receive an "L" for SOWO 994.
- Students may defend their dissertation proposal at the same time they defend their qualifying paper but they are not required to do so.
- Once students have advanced to candidacy, they must enroll for at least two semesters of dissertation credits SOWO 994 (3 credit hours each).

The following is a **recommended** course sequence for doctoral students. For students in the MSW/PhD continuum, please see the Doctoral Program Manual for a recommended sequence and discuss with your advisor. Students may take a course overload with permission of their advisor and the doctoral program chair.

**1<sup>st</sup> Year / Fall Semester**

Course	CREDIT	Sem/Yr Completed	Transfer/Exemption*	
SOWO 900 Conceptualizing Social Problems to Inform Interventions	3			
SOWO 910 Research Methods in Social Interventions	3			
SOWO 911 Social Statistics and Data Analysis (exempted, take advanced stats course, qualitative methods course, or substantive/theory course)	3			

**1<sup>st</sup> Year / Spring Semester**

Course	Credit	Sem/Yr Completed	Transfer/Exemption*	
SOWO 918 Multiple Regression Analysis	3			
SOWO 919 Qualitative Analysis	3			
Elective in substantive/theory area	3			

**2<sup>nd</sup> Year / Fall Semester**

Course	Credit	Sem/Yr Completed	Transfer/Exemption*	
SOWO 914 Measurement in Social Intervention Research	3			
Advanced stats course, e.g., SOWO 917 Longitudinal and Multilevel Data Analysis (HLM)	3			
Elective in substantive/theory area	3			

*Plan Research Practicum by end of the semester.*

**2<sup>nd</sup> Year / Spring Semester**

Course	Credit	Sem/Yr Completed	Transfer/Exemption*	
SOWO 912 Research Practicum I	3			
SOWO 916 Advanced stats course, e.g., SEM	3			
SOWO 940 Development of Social Intervention Models	3			

*At the beginning of the semester, submit signed Research Practicum agreement to the Doctoral Program. By end of the semester, make arrangements for Teaching Practicum, identify dissertation committee, and complete 2<sup>nd</sup> year Review with DPC.*



## ALTERNATIVE CURRICULAR PLANS (MSW/PHD CONTINUUM)

### **Admissions Requirements:**

- a) Record of high academic achievement.
- b) Evidence of high academic ability.
- c) Demonstration of strong interest in advancing knowledge about social issues and social work practice.
- d) Strong undergraduate research background or previous master's degree in a related discipline.
- e) Applicants to the MSW/PHD Continuum must be considered through both masters and doctoral admissions processes.
- f) Students without a master's degree in social work may be admitted as MSW/PHD applicants or may apply during their first year in the social work masters program. Students in this category take only masters courses their first year and join the following year's cohort of doctoral students.

### **Summary Of Course Plan:**

- a) Students without a MSW will have a reduced RA hourly requirement so they can have time to begin fieldwork and to begin PhD research courses in the first year.
- b) Students must complete (or exempt and replace) all MSW Foundation courses, take the required MSW concentration advanced courses in policy, practice and human behavior, and complete the Foundation and Concentration Field Practica. In defining learning objectives for the Advanced Practicum, the MSW/PHD Continuum student may focus on research tasks and research learning.
- c) Unless the student is granted an exception by completing the required form and obtaining the appropriate signatures of permission, all advanced concentration courses should be taken in one concentration.
- d) Even though they may be concurrently completing a prerequisite for the course and/or might not otherwise be eligible as first year students for required advanced curriculum courses, Continuum students will be permitted to register for these courses. This will ensure students sufficient flexibility to complete the required master's program courses.
- e) The masters program Advanced Research Requirement (SoWo 810) may be satisfied through SoWo 914, the doctoral measurement course.
- f) MSW electives are satisfied by other doctoral program courses.
- g) In all, MSW/PHD Continuum students must take 44 credits of regular master's program courses and may replace master's requirements with up to 18 credits.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MSW/PHD CONTINUUM

### *Which Ph.D. courses automatically substitute for MSW requirements?*

SoWo 910 substitutes for SoWo 810

SoWo 911 substitutes for SoWo 510

SoWo 940 substitutes for an advanced practice course in the Management and Community Practice Concentration

### *Which Ph.D. courses could possibly substitute for MSW requirements?*

SoWo 900 could possibly substitute for an HBSE course, although this must be discussed with the faculty member who is responsible for approving equivalency credit for HBSE courses. A student might, in theory, make the case that SoWo 900 includes material that HBSE courses also cover and that this advanced theoretical study, in addition to coursework that a student might have taken in another graduate program, sufficiently covers this course content.

### *Does the research practicum substitute for the second year of field work?*

Generally speaking, the research practicum does not substitute for the second year of field work.<sup>1</sup> The field work in the second year is intended to provide students with an opportunity to gain a conceptual and practical understanding of their concentration and their field of practice in a community agency. In the Direct Practice Concentration, the learning goals primarily relate to the assessment and intervention directly with clients or client groups. Research in this concentration is used to inform the direct practice. In the Management and Community Practice Concentration, the learning goals primarily relate to the assessment of the interrelationship among human service, social, cultural and political systems, using community and relationship-building skills, assessing policies and procedures, etc. However, in this concentration the following learning goals must also be met: engage an organizational or community system in analysis of needs and specify outcome objectives for planned intervention with and agency/community system. It is conceivable therefore, that in this concentration research could be a part of a field practice experience. This decision would be made on a case-by-case basis in order to be responsive to the learning objectives of the student, the needs of the agency, and the requirements of the Field Education Program.

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<sup>1</sup> This was the case earlier in the MSW/PHD program's history, but was changed several years ago because of concerns about the research practicum not meeting the field work requirements at UNC and because of agreement that it is important for students to be in agency settings, at least some of their second year. If the research practicum is in an agency setting and students can meet the objectives of the second year, this would be a feasible placement. See further elaboration on this point, above.

***Can a block placement be done between the first and second year? Are there any other flexible models for field which might be possible?<sup>2</sup>***

A summer block placement can be done, in some cases, but must be determined on an individual basis. Generally speaking, summer block placements are completed after the applicable course work has been completed. In the alternative, students must be prepared, in relation to having taken necessary courses, to conduct the work that they are asked to do in their summer field placement. If this preparation involves a course that they have not yet taken, special arrangements may be made for students to receive simultaneous instruction from a faculty member under an independent study during the summer. Or it may be that there is excellent pre- and in-service training at the agency which, along with strong student preparation in general, would allow students to meet their learning objectives and the objectives of the field placement (without having had advanced coursework simultaneous to, or proceeding, the field placement).

***Are other options for fulfilling field work requirements possible?***

One important option is a concentration field placement that is, at least, partially completed during the summer after the second year. This option is used by MSW/MPH students to complete their concentration placement, so extending this possibility to continuum students is reasonable. Mixed alternatives are a possibility—e.g., two days a week in field during the 9-month school year (second year), and finishing up the placement in the summer after the second year, or starting the concentration placement two or three days a week in the summer after the first year, and finishing the field work during the academic year). Again, individual decisions regarding continuum students' field placements will be made in consultation with the MSW/PhD faculty liaison, Field Education Director, and the doctoral program Chair.

***Do any concentration courses need to be taken before summer block placements?***

This is likely to be the case, depending on the field placement (see discussion of the expectation for concurrent learning provided above).

***Can concurrent independent studies be used to support student learning during the summer?***

Yes, this is possible, as long as all the requisite learning conditions are met (see answers above).

***Is funding available for the field fee for the summer block placement?***

The School makes every effort to pay for summer fees for MSW/PHD students.

***Are there some types of placements that have been particularly useful for MSW/PHD students?***

Students who have been involved in macro-practice and have conducted agency-based research have found that to be a useful way to address their practice and research learning needs. Current students will provide the field office information about placements they have found useful, so that the Field Office, and others, are aware of such opportunities.

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<sup>2</sup> The impetus behind this is student concern about the course and workload in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year – i.e. the commencement of demanding doctoral courses and completing 3 days/week in field, along with research assistantship obligations of 16 hours and MSW courses is quite challenging, if not impossible (obligated weekly hours quickly exceed 40 if not more).



**Example of MSW/PhD Continuum Plan of Study**

<b><u>Year 1</u></b>		<b>Credits</b>
<b>Fall</b>	SOWO 500 Infancy to Adolescence	3
	SOWO 530 Social Welfare Policy	3
	SOWO 540 Direct Practice	3
	SOWO 570 Management and Community Practice	3
	Field and Field Seminar	4
<b>Spring</b>	SOWO 501 Confronting Oppression	3
	SOWO 505 Adulthood and Older Adulthood	3
	SOWO 517 Integrated Practice	3
	Qualitative Methods	3
	Field and Field Seminar	4
<b><u>Year 2</u></b>		
<b>Fall</b>	A HBSE/Practice course of relevance to their interest	3
	SOWO 910 Research Methods (replaces SOWO 810 & a short course)	3
	SOWO 911 Social Statistics (replaces SOWO 510)	3
	Field	6
<b>Spring</b>	Advanced Policy	1.5
	Regression Analysis	3
	elective--can be outside school in substantive area	3
	Social work short course	1.5
	Field	6
<b><u>Year 3</u></b>		
<b>Fall</b>	SOWO 900 Conceptualizing Social Problems	3
	SOWO 914 Measurement	3
	elective--can be outside school in substantive area	3
	MSW COMPLETED	
<b>Spring</b>	SOWO 940 Development of Social Interventions	3
	HLM	3
	SOWO 912 Research Practicum	3
<b><u>Year 4</u></b>		
<b>Fall</b>	SEM	3
	SOWO 913 Advanced Research Methods	3
	SOWO 941 Teaching Practicum	3
<b>Spring</b>	Course outside school in substantive area	3

# DOCTORAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

## WHAT'S PRESCRIBED BY THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

Following is what the Graduate School Handbook says about the Doctoral Comprehensive exams. <http://handbook.unc.edu/phd.html>

“A doctoral written examination, a doctoral oral examination, and a final oral examination covering the dissertation and other topics as required by the examining committee are required for doctoral degree completion.

The first two items together constitute a comprehensive examination of the student’s command of his or her field. If the student declares a minor, the student will be examined on the minor in at least one of the two doctoral examinations. Together they should:

- assess the extent and currency of the candidate’s knowledge in a manner that is as comprehensive and searching as the best practices of that field require;
- test the candidate’s knowledge of all transferred courses;
- discover any weaknesses in the candidate’s knowledge that need to be remedied by additional courses or other instruction; and
- determine the candidate’s fitness to continue work toward the doctorate.

The final oral examination is primarily a true defense of the dissertation. It may be open to the public, limited in attendance to the candidate and the committee, or a combination of the two. Questions that relate the dissertation to the field are appropriate.”

### **Examining Committee:**

“A committee of at least five members is required. A majority of the members of a doctoral committee must be regular members of the UNC-Chapel Hill Graduate Faculty from the student’s major academic program. Other members may be special appointees to the Graduate Faculty. Doctoral programs are encouraged to include scholars from outside the program to serve as members of doctoral committees.” The committee should be in place before the student completes an outline of his/her qualifying paper. If a committee member is not a member of the UNC Graduate School faculty and a fixed-term appointment is required, please contact the Doctoral Program Coordinator to complete the procedure. Each doctoral student is expected to consult with members of the dissertation committee at frequent intervals throughout the progress of his or her research and will be required to submit a progress report to each member of the committee at least once a year.

Academic programs determine the order of doctoral written and oral exams, but before the student may take the second exam (be it written or oral) he/she must have fulfilled, or will have fulfilled by the end of the semester in which the exam is to be taken, all required courses and the minimum residence requirement for the doctorate. If the second doctoral examination of the dissertation prospectus, the Report of Doctoral Committee Form (<http://gradschool.unc.edu/pdf/wdcomm20100503.pdf>) must be submitted to and approved by the Graduate School before the examination. Please give this form to the Doctoral Program Coordinator for submission to the Graduate School.

## PROCESS FOR THE QUALIFYING EXAMINATIONS

In the School of Social Work, the doctoral comprehensive examination consists of (a) the preparation of the qualifying paper, (b) an oral examination on the contents of the paper; and (c) the preparation of the dissertation proposal and an oral defense of the dissertation proposal.

### **Content of the written examination**

The doctoral qualifying paper will consist of a single paper that demonstrates the capacity of the student to integrate information from research, relevant literature, and course materials in order to frame the statement of the problem, literature review and theoretical frameworks sections of the dissertation. The paper will formulate an issue or problem of importance for social work and identify a specific issue for research. The qualifying paper will include a critical examination of problem to be investigated and follow a sequence of steps that provide a careful review and analysis of the research that has been conducted on that problem, the theoretical frameworks that have attempted to explain the problem, relevant interventions that have addressed the problem, and research strategies that have been used to examine the problem. The qualifying paper is to include at least the following sections:

- a) Statement of the research problem and its significance
- b) Critical review of previous research addressing the problem or issue
- c) Critical analysis of theoretical frameworks or perspectives for examining this problem, selecting 2-4 major theoretical perspectives
- d) Critical review of intervention programs, strategies, or approaches in the problem area
- e) Critical review of research methodologies or approaches for examining this problem or of the important methodological issues in doing research in this area of interest (roughly three approaches or issues, if appropriate)
- f) Conclusions and implications.

The qualifying paper should be a disciplined and focused analysis of the relevant scholarship involved in your qualifying area. The paper should be reasonably comprehensive, but must also be disciplined -- the final product should provide a foundation for the dissertation research, but may contain material that is not necessarily to be included in the dissertation proposal. The anticipated length of the qualifying paper is to approximately 50-60 pages, including references. This means that a careful synthesis is necessary rather than an extensive narrative description.

This proposed outline is to be applied flexibly to fit the particular research problem and approach of each dissertation.

### **Criteria for evaluating the written exam**

- a) It should demonstrate critical thinking.
- b) It should include content addressing oppressed populations.
- c) The review of literature should show evidence of the use of empirical data.

- d) It should be carefully and clearly written, with style and citations consistent with the APA style manual.

The student and their qualifying examination committee should review the Written Qualifying Examination Rating Form for specific guidance on the criteria that will be used to evaluate the quality of the qualifying paper. This Rating Form offers criteria that can be used for each section of the qualifying paper and provides the committee members with a simple tool for assessing their ratings of the paper and providing recommendations to students as they prepare their paper for the examination.

The qualifying examination paper does not have to be publishable at the time of the examination. At some time before completion of the dissertation, the student is strongly encouraged to revise the examination paper into a review article for publication and to submit it to a refereed journal. Additionally, students are encouraged but not required to make a public presentation on their qualifying paper; this may be at the school or at a professional meeting.

### **Process for planning and evaluating the written examination**

While taking the dissertation seminar (SOWO 913 Advance Research Methods in Social Intervention), the student will discuss the contents of the qualifying paper with his/her Dissertation Committee Chair and produce a detailed outline of the qualifying paper content. Subsequently, the student will obtain final approval of the outline from the Chair.

The student and Chair will compose a memorandum to go out to the student's committee under the Chair's name stating that the two of them have agreed on the content the student has outlined for the qualifying paper, and requesting amendments from the members if they see any deficiencies in the outline. The intent, however, is for the Advisor to have primary responsibility for helping the student delineate appropriate content for the examination. All of this should happen by the end of the semester before the one in which the qualifying paper and oral examination of the qualifying paper are to be completed.

The student will then write the paper by the date agreed upon.

The committee will read the paper and make a judgment about whether the paper is of passing quality, using the program's qualifying examination form. If committee members believe that changes are needed, they will provide directions for revisions in writing to the committee chair, who will summarize and transmit them to the student. When the revisions are completed and the committee members have read them, the Chair will ascertain that all committee members agree that the qualifying paper is of passing quality. The student, Chair, and committee will then schedule the oral examination at the earliest possible date.

### **Timing of the Written and Oral Examination of the Qualifying Paper**

The qualifying paper will be written and the oral examination will be conducted no later than the end of the semester following the one in which the student has completed her or his coursework. This will mean that the qualifying paper should be completed sometime before the end of the semester.

The student has the option of completing both the qualifying paper and the oral examination of the paper during the last semester of coursework.

Responsibility for timeliness of reading/returning drafts is shared by the student, the committee members, the dissertation chair, and as a last resort, the doctoral chair. The student is responsible for informing committee members when he/she will be delivering drafts and asking committee members how much time they will need to review drafts. At a minimum, faculty should be given two weeks to read the qualifying paper.

### **The Oral Examination of the Qualifying Paper**

The oral examination is intended to clarify any questions the committee members have about the paper and to provide the student with feedback from the committee about the paper.

The oral examination will consist of a discussion of the contents of the written paper. The student will be expected to explain any portions of the paper or to elaborate on any portion of the paper. It is the Chair's responsibility to ensure that the student is accountable only for the qualifying paper content agreed on when the outline was approved by the committee.

### **Including the Dissertation Proposal in the Oral Examination of the Qualifying Paper**

During the same semester in which she or he is preparing the qualifying examination, the student may also complete the dissertation proposal, so that it can be reviewed, revised, and approved by the committee at the same meeting as the student's oral examination of the qualifying paper. This is an option and not required. Students in consultation with their Chair may choose to schedule a second meeting with their dissertation committee to present and defend the dissertation proposal. Content of the dissertation proposal is described in the section of the manual dealing with the dissertation.

Following the oral examination on the qualifying paper, the committee will formally vote on whether the exam is graded as passing. The written and complete oral examination will be graded as "pass with distinction," "pass," or "fail." This vote must be unanimous.

The student may fail sections of the qualifying paper or the oral examination. If a student does not pass any portion of the written or oral examination, the committee will negotiate a written plan about what remediation will be required. The committee members and the student will sign the plan, indicating understanding and agreement. The student will have until the end of the summer following the semester in which the examinations were taken, or, if not taken in the spring semester, until the end of the subsequent semester, to complete the revision of the examination. If the student fails any part of the examination a second time, he or she will be terminated from the doctoral program. This decision is subject to the normal appeals procedures of the School of Social Work and the university.

If the committee members agree that the student has passed the oral examination on the qualifying paper, the committee and the student may go on to discuss the dissertation proposal in the same meeting, and if they agree, the committee may approve the dissertation proposal.

### **Examination Forms**

"Immediately after each examination has been given, results should be sent to The Graduate School on the [Doctoral Exam Report Form \(http://gradschool.unc.edu/pdf/wdexam.pdf\)](http://gradschool.unc.edu/pdf/wdexam.pdf) . If the report of the first doctoral oral shows that the dissertation prospectus has not been examined or that it has been considered but not accepted, a separate report must be filed with The Graduate School as soon as the prospectus is approved." <http://handbook.unc.edu/phd.html>

When the student has scheduled the oral examination on the qualifying paper, he or she should pick up from the Doctoral Program Office or download from the Graduate School website the two Graduate School forms, which record the written and oral exam of the qualifying paper, the oral defense of the dissertation and the committee composition. The student should type the requested information on the form before the examination.

After the examination, at which the committee members will have signed the forms, the student should return them to the Doctoral Program Coordinator for proper filing and forwarding to the Graduate School.

### **Failure of Comprehensive Examination**

*“A graduate student who fails either a written or oral examination may not take the examination a second time until at least three months after the first attempt. The student should work with his or her academic program to identify areas needing additional emphasis and to establish an action plan to prepare for taking the exam a second time.*

*A student who fails an examination for the second time becomes academically ineligible to continue in The Graduate School.*

*When special circumstances warrant, a student made academically ineligible under the conditions stated above may be reinstated upon petition initiated through the student’s academic program. Students and academic program representatives must fill out the [Request for Reinstatement to Graduate School Form](http://gradschool.unc.edu/pdf/wrenstmt.pdf) (<http://gradschool.unc.edu/pdf/wrenstmt.pdf>). In addition, no student may continue in a program or take an examination a third time without approval by the Administrative Board of The Graduate School.” - <http://handbook.unc.edu/phd.html> (Failure of Examinations).*

# THE DISSERTATION

## PURPOSE OF THE DISSERTATION

*"The dissertation is the beginning of one's scholarly work, not its culmination. Dissertation research should provide students with hands-on directed experience in the primary research methods of the discipline, and should prepare students for the type of research/scholarship that will be expected of them after they receive the Ph.D. degree." (Council of Graduate Schools)*

## GUIDELINES FOR THE DISSERTATION

Here's a general description of the way the dissertation is conceived:

*"The doctoral dissertation should (1) reveal the student's ability to analyze, interpret, and synthesize information; (2) demonstrate the student's knowledge of the literature relating to the project or at least acknowledge prior scholarship on which the dissertation is built; (3) describe the methods and procedures used; (4) present results in a sequential and logical manner; and (5) display the student's ability to discuss fully and coherently the meaning of the results." (Council of Graduate Schools)*

Within the context of our program, the dissertation should represent an original and independent piece of work contributing to theory and to the knowledge base for social work practice.

**The question of originality** -- In its most general sense, "original" describes research that has not been done previously or that creates new knowledge. Although a dissertation should not duplicate another researcher's or scholar's work, the topic, project, or approach taken need not be solely that of the graduate student. An Advisor or other faculty member should encourage a student to explore a particular topic or project with the idea that the student himself or herself will independently develop the "thesis" of the dissertation. The student should be able to demonstrate what portion of the scholarship represents his or her own thinking.

**The question of collaboration** – *"In those disciplines where doctoral research efforts are typically part of a larger collaborative project, it is crucial that an individual student's contribution be precisely delineated. Whether the collaboration is between faculty and student or among students, Ph.D. candidates are expected to be able to demonstrate the uniqueness of their own contributions and to define what part of the larger work represents their own ideas and individual efforts." (Council of Graduate Schools)*

In the context of the doctoral program of the School of Social Work, this means that the dissertation research may be part of a larger project, but the student should demonstrate in the dissertation proposal how the specific thesis or research question, and the development of the means of testing or answering it, are uniquely the student's own.

### **INTENDED FEATURES OF A DISSERTATION IN SOCIAL WORK AT UNC-CH**

- a) Related to the design and evaluation of social interventions;
- b) Contributing to the knowledge base for social work practice;

Examples:

Test of an intervention; or analysis of needs with a view to planning social interventions to address them; or analysis of characteristics of a target population with a view to planning social interventions in a way that will be useful and accessible to the population; or testing the effectiveness of organizational structures for service delivery; or historical analysis of a policy or intervention.

- a) Incorporating attention to all three levels of intervention, though not necessarily in the research question;
- b) Grounded in and adding to theory or theories relevant to the subject of study;
- c) Flexible in terms of methods, which can include qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, and/or historical methods, and can include secondary analysis of existing data.
- d) Including relevant content relating dissertation topic and findings to oppressed groups.

### **Advice Regarding the Dissertation**

The first criterion for the scope of the dissertation is manageability; this will be difficult for the novice to judge, and the student will need to rely on the guidance of the Chair, with consultation from other committee members, for delineating a manageable scope to the dissertation project.

The second criterion is that the dissertation project leads to a significant contribution to knowledge, in the opinion of the Chair and the student's committee. A dissertation question should lead to answers that will make a difference, which will contribute something new that is also of use.

## POLICIES REGARDING THE DISSERTATION

*“The dissertation should be publishable, or the source of publishable materials.”* (Council of Graduate Schools)

*“Although the 'traditional' dissertation as a unified work with an introduction that states an objective, a literature review, a presentation of the methodology or procedures to be used, and a concluding discussion of results should be respected, flexibility with respect to form should be permitted.”* (Council of Graduate Schools)

*“Whether the form of the dissertation is a monograph, a series of articles, or a set of essays is determined by the research expectations and accepted forms of publication in the discipline, as well as by custom in the discipline and the student's program.”* (Council of Graduate Schools)

Two formats will be acceptable for the dissertation in the School of Social Work:

- a) The traditional "book-style" document which covers:
  - Statement of problem
  - Background of problem, review of literature and significance of this study;
  - Conceptual framework for the research;
  - Research questions or hypotheses to be tested;
  - Methods, including sampling, data collection, and method of analysis;
  - Results;
  - Discussion, conclusions and implications for practice and future research;
- b) An alternative style that includes the same content, but one or more of the topics can be presented in the form of manuscripts (typically three) suitable for and ready for submission for publication. Manuscripts could address the conceptual framework for the study, the methodology, and/or the research findings. The dissertation should be unified by chapters or appendices that present the rest of the required content, including an appropriate review of the literature, an expanded methods section, an overall synthesis of the research findings and discussion of implications for practice and directions for future research. While this format may be more challenging, it should have the advantage of speeding up the process of publication of results.

Guidelines for preparation of a dissertation in this format are as follows.

- Each manuscript should be of the quality, length and format usually expected for publication in a peer reviewed journal.
- One or more research papers may be included. The papers must represent the work of the student alone, even if they will later be revised along with a collaborator, or in published form, have co-authors listed.
- Additional detailed results may be presented in appendices.
- There should be sufficient documentation of the research process to demonstrate the student's research competence.
- The synthesis chapter should provide (not necessarily in the following order):
  - An overview of the major research findings;
  - A discussion of the significance: the ways in which the research contributes to the field, that is, where it confirms previous work or breaks new ground, or the context in which the research should be placed, and the applications to practice the work suggests;
  - A discussion of the major strengths and weaknesses of the work;
  - Directions for future research.

The synthesis should reflect the entire research agenda reflected in the dissertation, that is, it should synthesize across the individual papers.

At the time of the completion of the final dissertation proposal, student, advisor and committee will negotiate the final scope of the dissertation research and the format of the dissertation, based on the appropriateness of the selected format to the research question, the project, and the student's publication plans.

## THE DISSERTATION PROCESS

As they apply to and enter the program, students are encouraged to begin defining their area of interest and the research questions they wish to investigate.

Each course assignment in core, supporting, and elective courses has the potential for completing some piece of the literature review, conceptual development, and writing for the dissertation. The student should use the research assistantship, if practical, but definitely the research practicum, to complete building blocks for the dissertation. *"The dissertation ought to be viewed as contiguous with course work, not remote from it."* (Council of Graduate Schools)

By following these steps, the coursework and research experiences should come together in the qualifying paper, which consists of a full examination of the state of the art in theory, intervention, and research methods relevant to the research problem the student has chosen for the dissertation research.

### Guidelines for Content of the Traditional Dissertation

<i>Dissertation Content</i>	<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Dissertation</i>
Statement of Problem	Full	Full
Background (theory, conceptual framework, intervention context, and past research) and Significance	Brief	Full
Conceptual Framework for the Study	Full	Full
Research Questions or Hypotheses to Be Tested	Full	Full
Methods	Full	Full
Design	Full	Full
Sample	Full	Full
Data collection	Full	Full
Method and plan for data analysis	Full	Full
Findings		Full
Interpretation and Discussion		Full
Implications for Theory and Practice		Full
Strengths and Weaknesses of the Study		Full
Directions for Further Research		Full

In the background and significance, interpretation and discussion, and/or implications for theory and practice, the student should consider the interrelationship among the policy, program, and practice technology relevant to the dissertation topic. The student should also include relevant content relating dissertation topic and findings to oppressed groups.

## **Guidelines for Article Format for Dissertation**

Historically, dissertations often became publishable books—the “coin of the scholarly realm.” Now that the emphasis on publishing in peer review journals has increased, and the availability of book publishing for single authored efforts has decreased, professional schools are increasingly encouraging students to write dissertations that more readily convert into published articles. This has been a strong tradition at the School of Social Work. Here are several possible article based dissertation formats. As with the classic dissertation format, plans to use this format must be discussed thoroughly with your committee. The plans for each paper should be detailed in your dissertation proposal. Other considerations related to the selection of a paper-style dissertation are briefly described below.

### **Alternative Dissertation Format (3 Chapters)**

- ◆ Review of scholarly literature written in article format.
- ◆ Science style (introduction, methods, results, discussion, references) version of methods development or of one aspect of results.
- ◆ Science style version of additional aspect of results.
- ◆ (May have appendixes with more detailed methods and results)

### **Alternative Dissertation Format: Additional Information**

- ◆ An introductory “chapter” can explain how the articles related to traditional chapters—
  - I.e., which elements of traditional chapters are emphasized in each article
  - The introduction may also clarify what content is duplicated
  - Conclusions “chapter” may be added to summarize the entire study

### **What the Alternative Dissertation is Not**

- ◆ Collection of any three articles developed during the course of doctoral study
- ◆ Substitute for doing a single major study of substantial breadth and depth
- ◆ Requirement that the articles are published (or publishable in journals for which doctoral committee members are reviewers)

## Miscellaneous Points

- ◆ Despite the common wisdom, articles can be published prior to inclusion in dissertations, as long as the copyright holder and the committee members agree.
- ◆ Articles could all be from the same data set or *from different data sets*
- ◆ Articles could answer same narrow question or *could address a more general question*
- ◆ Competencies and outcomes to consider:
  - Strong scholarship
  - Article writing ability
  - Building career with early publications
  - Expeditious completion of PhD

## DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Students may prepare the dissertation proposal during the same semester in which they write the qualifying paper or write and defend the dissertation proposal in the semester following their oral defense of the qualifying papers. In addition to the elements listed on page 43, the dissertation proposal shall contain:

- a) The format in which the dissertation will be written
- b) Human subjects clearance
- c) Letter of support or agreement from research site, including an agreement about authorship, ownership of the data, etc. if applicable.

Because the dissertation proposal will constitute a contract about what the student will do, it should be explicit on all points.

If the dissertation research is based on a faculty member's project, issues about co-authorship of material to be published from the dissertation are to be discussed and an agreement specified in writing as part of the preliminary dissertation proposal and the final dissertation proposal. If circumstances change during the course of the dissertation research, the written agreement will be revised.

When the Chair and the student agrees that the proposal is complete, it will be circulated to committee members, who will provide feedback and suggestions to the student. The proposal must be discussed as part of the oral qualifying examination and may be approved at that time.

As the "contract" about the work between the student and the committee, committee members should sign the approved proposal. When the proposal has been signed, a copy of it will be forwarded to the Doctoral Chair for review and inclusion in the student's file. Using the graduate school form, the Advisor will notify the graduate school that the committee has approved the student's final proposal

It will be the understanding of the student and the committee that the dissertation proposal will continue to evolve, and that later changes in the research plan will be reviewed by, and must be approved by, the Advisor and the committee.

If students are conducting or participating in conducting research on which they intend to base the dissertation, either in conjunction with a research assistantship or independently, it is important that they provide a brief written "provisional" proposal and discuss the research plan with their committee before proceeding, even though this does not constitute their formal dissertation proposal. Students proceed on dissertation research without committee approval at their own risk, and **MUST RECOGNIZE THAT THE COMMITTEE COULD FIND THE RESEARCH PLAN NOT ACCEPTABLE.**

Responsibility for timeliness of reading/returning drafts is shared by the student, the committee members, the committee chair, and as a last resort, the doctoral chair. The student should take responsibility for choosing committee members who can be expected to return drafts promptly; at the same time, the student is also responsible for informing committee members when s/he will be delivering drafts, and negotiating with each committee member when s/he can return them in light of other obligations. When a committee member is failing to return drafts as agreed, the student should first go to that committee member; if that doesn't yield results, the committee chair should intervene; and if that fails, the doctoral chair should take action.

One practical issue may require early completion of a dissertation proposal. Because (a) financial support that the School of Social Work commands is finite and will be concentrated in the first three years of study; (b) financial support is the most critical determinant of time to completion and (c) deadlines for dissertation grants and fellowships fall long before funding could begin, students may need to prepare the dissertation proposal and have it approved before the qualifying examinations are passed. When students are preparing proposals for dissertation support before completing their qualifying examinations, they should negotiate committee approval of the proposal.

## TIMETABLE TO THE PH.D.

<i>Dissertation Component</i>	<i>Completed</i>
Qualifying paper, dissertation proposal and oral exam	The qualifying paper must be completed and defended by the end of the semester after the one in which coursework is completed. The dissertation proposal may be approved at the same time or in a subsequent meeting of the committee.
Dissertation	Defended usually 1 to 1 1/2 years following completion of coursework

Policies governing Dissertation Preparation and Requirements are in the Graduate Handbook and should be read and followed.

### **COMPLETION OF DISSERTATION AND ORAL DEFENSE OF THE DISSERTATION**

The Graduate School Handbook specifies the following:  
(<http://handbook.unc.edu/phd.html#examinations>)

“The final oral defense will be held only after all members of the committee have had adequate opportunity to review a draft of the doctoral dissertation. The dissertation advisor is responsible for determining that the draft is in an appropriate form for committee evaluation. If substantial revisions are necessary, they should be completed before the final oral defense is scheduled. The committee may, at the time of the final oral but no later, require alterations and corrections, but these should constitute relatively minor changes agreed to by a majority of the committee members. The dissertation advisor is responsible for verifying that the changes required by the committee have been made and may delegate this responsibility to the committee member(s) who imposed the requirements. All committee members are expected to be present at the defense.

The final oral may be open to the public or limited in attendance to the candidate and the committee. Questions that relate the dissertation to the field are appropriate. A dissertation is accepted only after the approval of a majority of the examining committee members.

When these requirements have been met, the Doctoral Exam Report Form is submitted (signatures of all committee members are required), and the dissertation, in final form designed to meet the standards as defined in *A Guide to Theses and Dissertations* (paper or electronic submissions), is submitted to The Graduate School.”

The student’s committee chair takes primary responsibility for seeing that the student completes an acceptable dissertation manuscript. Only when the chair considers the manuscript acceptable should it be sent out to the other committee members.

In many cases, all committee members will have approved the dissertation proposal as part of the Written and Oral Qualifying Examinations. In the event that members have joined the committee after the student's Written and Oral Qualifying Examinations, the student and the committee chair should ensure that the new committee member has reviewed and approved the dissertation proposal and any revisions made subsequent to the qualifying examinations.

In discussions with committee members, students should gain a clear understanding of the role that the committee members are willing to play. For example, some may want to be involved in many aspects of the project from an early point, some will only want to read the sections discussing the methods and analysis, and others will want to read the dissertation only after it has been thoroughly reviewed by the Chair. Typically, the student and the Chair will work very closely on the dissertation before submission to other committee members.

Once the completed *penultimate* draft of the dissertation has been distributed, committee members may request revisions. These should be communicated to the student's committee chair as well as the student. A reasonable schedule for these revisions should be set.

## **REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT**

In order to graduate, doctoral students must complete a minimum of six credit hours of dissertation (994).

Students must be registered for a minimum of three credit hours of dissertation (994) during the semester in which the dissertation prospectus is approved (if the dissertation prospectus was not approved at the time of the qualifying paper examination), and the semester in which the dissertation is defended.

<http://handbook.unc.edu/phd.html#dissertation>

# MECHANICS: FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Students can obtain financial support for their doctoral study in several ways.

## Research Assistantships

There are several kinds of research assistantships: a) Merit Assistantships, funded by the UNC Graduate School; b) research assistantships in which the student works for pay on a grant or contract; and c) assistantships provided by the program from school or program funds such as endowed funds. Students may receive funding from more than one source.

### ◆ GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Research assistantships, in which a student works under a faculty member's direction and supervision in various research related tasks, are one means by which we can help prepare students for careers of research performance and productivity. For this reason, we recommend that all doctoral students in social work have opportunities to serve as research assistants. The following guidelines are recommended to help inform the design and implementation of these opportunities.

- a) The primary intent of the research assistantship is educational, supporting the development of research scholars who are capable of producing and disseminating knowledge for the profession and the field of social welfare.
- b) All research assistantships, both paid and unpaid, represent voluntary relationships on the part of both faculty members and students.
- c) If either the faculty member or the student feels that the assistantship is not meeting his or her respective needs, they should first try to deal with this with one another; if unable to reach a mutually satisfactory agreement, they should then consult with the student's Advisor; if still unable to reach a mutually satisfactory agreement, they should then consult with the doctoral chair; if all else fails they should ask the Dean to help in reaching a solution.
- d) With the approval of their Advisor and committee, students may receive academic credit for work performed under a faculty member's supervision as an unpaid research assistant. This work may qualify for credit as a research practicum if it meets the criteria for the research practicum.
- e) Students will not receive academic credit for work performed as a paid research assistant.
- f) Although both full time students (registered for 9 or more hours of academic credit) and part time students (registered for less than 9 hours of academic credit) may qualify to serve as either paid or unpaid research assistants, priority for paid assistantships will be given to full time students.
- g) In order for students to give priority to their academic program of study, it is recommended that all assistantships be limited to no more than 20 hours per week during the academic year. Students who receive paid assistantships through funds from the Graduate School, or from the pool of discretionary resources available within the School of Social Work, will be limited to 15 hours per week for first year students and 20 work hours per week for other students during the academic year unless approved by the student's Advisor and committee.

Faculty who are funding first year assistantships are urged to limit the actual work to 15 hours per week, if it is at all possible.

- h) Flexibility of hours to accommodate time crunches in either the student's coursework or the research project will be at the discretion of the student but should be worked out with his/her research supervisor. Projects may require that students complete time sheets documenting the number of hours worked. While any one month may require more or less than the allotted number of work hours, at the end of the semester, the total number of hours worked shall not average more than 20 (or 15 in the case of first year students) hours per week for the total number of weeks of the semester.
- i) Students are responsible for keeping their Advisors and the Doctoral Chair informed of their involvement as either paid or unpaid research assistants. Advisors and students are encouraged to examine together how research assistantships fit or can be made to fit with the student's educational and career objectives.
- j) Before beginning their work together, the research supervisor will provide the student with a written contract (Payment Arrangement – U:\GROUPS\Doctoral\Forms\Financial) that states what the sources of funding are, what the stipend is, and what the expected work hours will be. For returning students, in order to be paid for August, students need to complete and return this form to the Doctoral Program Coordinator by July 31<sup>st</sup>. For new students, the form is completed at orientation. Faculty are accountable to their funding source and may require the student to complete bi-weekly timesheets or a monthly time-log. Timesheets are available from the Business Office and the time-log can be found at: U:\GROUPS\Doctoral\Forms\Financial.

Faculty members within the School of Social Work who wish to request a research assistant will, at the time it is requested, submit their proposal for the assistantship to the Doctoral Chair. Information requested includes the required work activities; the educational benefits of these activities in helping to prepare the student for a career of research performance and productivity in social work; the number of work hours required per week during the academic year; the duration of the assignment, and if the assignment involves more than one year, plans to continue support for the student and/or to help the student apply for support; the availability of funds in the present academic year, if any, to provide financial support for the student; and plans for supervision and direction of the student's work. The chair of the doctoral program will work with faculty members to try to make a good match with prospective students and students will be encouraged to make appointments with faculty members to discuss proposed research assistantships.

## **Seeking Outside Funding**

There are programs to support doctoral study and dissertation research. If funding is not a part of a grant or contract, as the student develops his/her dissertation topic, he/she should be working on a proposal to get support for carrying out this research.

Carolina Social Work Doctoral Students have successfully competed for support from the National Institute of Mental Health, the National Cancer Institute, the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the Spencer Foundation, the Hartford Foundation, the National Association of Social Workers, the Council on Social Work Education, and university competitive research grants.

In addition to the Doctoral Program Office, and individual faculty members, the University Office of Research Services will assist students to locate potential sources of funding.

### **◆ Funding**

Please refer to the following site:

<HTTP://GRADSCHOOL.UNC.EDU/FUNDING/CURRENT.HTML>

### **◆ Contract Teaching**

Students with teaching experience, and those who have completed the Teaching Practicum and Teaching Seminar, may be hired as contract faculty to teach masters level courses under faculty supervision. This arrangement provides the student with experience to develop teaching skills, and to compete for academic positions when they complete their Ph.D.

## **Travel Reimbursement**

Doctoral students are encouraged to attend and present at conferences such as CSWE and SSWR during the academic year. In order to request reimbursement of \$350 (attending) / \$450 (presenting) of travel expenses per conference attended, a Travel Request form (U:\GROUPS\Forms\Travel Agree\_files) must be completed and submitted to Brenda Vawter, Doctoral Program Coordinator, prior to traveling. Approval of these travel reimbursements is subject to funds available. Periodically, you will receive an email requesting your list of conferences you wish to attend. It is important that you reply by the given deadline for funding consideration.

# HOW THINGS WORK

## DOCTORAL ADVISING

### WHO WILL ADVISE?

#### ◆ **First Year Advising**

- a) An advisor will be assigned for the student's first year.
- b) Advising will also be accomplished through periodic meetings with the Doctoral Program Chair. Students will also meet with the Chair for an informal review after the first year.
- c) By the beginning of the second year, the assigned advisor, and student, will identify a faculty member to serve as the second year Advisor.
- d) At the end of the fourth semester, the student will undergo a second year review which will provide the opportunity to summarize progress and clarify plans for the oncoming years.
- e) All advisors and committees will be appointed in consultation with the Doctoral Chair.

#### ◆ **Second Year Advising**

What students need to accomplish this year in consultation with their Advisor:

##### *a) Fall Semester*

Plan and design the research practicum, identify site and research supervisor, and if possible, identify an outside committee member

##### *b) Spring Semester*

Begin to formulate a dissertation area and some possible research questions

On the basis of the probable direction for the dissertation, identify and recruit members of the Dissertation committee. There must be at least one member with expertise in the substantive area, the methodology, and the statistical or data analytic strategies for the dissertation.

The student should consult with the advisor about research assistantships for the third year. The advisor should encourage the student to explore possible sources of funding for the dissertation research.

The student and advisor should prepare for the second year review.

### ◆ **Third Year Advising**

What students need to accomplish this year with consultation from the advisor

#### *a) Fall Semester*

Students should complete an outline of their qualifying paper and dissertation proposal as part of the dissertation seminar they participate in their fifth semester. The instructor in this course will read and critique the outlines. Students should share these critiques with their Advisor or with their dissertation chair, if they have one.

On the basis of the probable dissertation plan, students should decide the final composition of their committee, and consult with them about the qualifying exam and dissertation. The Chair and members of the committee must approve the qualifying paper outline. (Manual, pg. 35 – Process for the Qualifying Examination)

The Chair should decide with the committee members and/or the student whether a committee meeting is necessary for discussion of dissertation plans and/or approval of the qualifying paper outline.

The Chair should encourage or assist the student to explore possible sources of funding for the dissertation research

#### *b) Spring Semester* (Manual, pg. 35 - Process for the Qualifying Examination)

During this semester (or the semester following the completion of coursework), students should complete the qualifying paper, and the Chair should determine when the paper is to be completed and that it meets the criteria for evaluation. At this point, the student will distribute it to the other committee members who will read it and offer feedback. A rating form is available to guide the student in preparing, and to assist the committee in evaluating the paper. Written feedback on the paper will be provided to the Chair, who will integrate it, decide what revisions are needed, and guide the student in completing it.

If possible, students may also complete the dissertation proposal during this semester, and circulate it for comments. When the suggested revisions in the qualifying paper and the proposal have been completed, the advisor will poll the members to ascertain that they find them acceptable, and then he/she will schedule the oral examination on the qualifying paper.

The Graduate School requires that the written examination be certified to be passed, and that permission be obtained before the oral examination can be scheduled. The required forms can be found at: <http://gradschool.unc.edu/forms.html#doctoral>

Following successful completion of the oral examination, including acceptance of the dissertation proposal, he/she is admitted to candidacy.

## REGULAR CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN STUDENT AND CHAIR

Regular consultations between the Ph.D. student and dissertation chair are an important means to encourage timely and scrupulous completion of the dissertation. Both student and Chair should be responsible for seeing that such meetings take place on a regular basis. (Council of Graduate Schools: 21) A good rule of thumb might be biweekly consultations between Chair and student.

## THE STUDENT'S COMMITTEE

It is expected that students will be making steady progress toward formulation of the dissertation topic and completion of steps preparatory to the dissertation through course assignments. As the topic of the dissertation takes shape, the student's committee should be formed, preferably by the end of the fourth semester, and certainly during the semester in which the student participates in the dissertation seminar.

The student's Chair and Committee Members advise the student about the dissertation proposal and the written and oral segments of the qualifying examination. The committee approves the final dissertation proposal, oversees completion of the dissertation, approves the dissertation, and conducts the final oral examination on the dissertation.

## COMMITTEE COMPOSITION (<http://handbook.unc.edu/phd.html#dissertation>)

In the School of Social Work, the student's committee must have no fewer than five members. Three of these must be members of the School of Social Work Faculty, and one must come from outside the school.

Additional members of the committee may be drawn from faculty of the School of Social Work, from the Research Practicum site, or from other sources, but the majority of committee members must be from the School of Social Work. One School of Social Work Graduate Faculty member will serve as chair of the committee. Members of the student's committee who are not members of the university graduate faculty will receive a Fixed-term Appointment. Please contact the Doctoral Program Coordinator to complete the paperwork for this appointment.

According to the Graduate School Handbook, "a majority of the members of the doctoral (oral) committee must be full members of the Graduate Faculty. Other members may be limited members of the Graduate Faculty or special appointees."

Committee members should be selected on the basis of substantive and methodological expertise in the area of the student's dissertation. There must be at least one member with expertise in the substantive area, the methodology, and the statistical or data analytic strategies for the dissertation.

## **EXTERNAL COMMITTEE MEMBER**

Students are encouraged to select an outside committee member in consultation with their Dissertation Committee Chair. The external committee member is usually a member of The Graduate Faculty of the University and has a primary appointment in a department or school in which the student has taken at least one supporting course. This person will serve on the student's committee, participating in and evaluating the written and oral exams, and helping to guide the student to prepare the dissertation.

## **FORMATION OF THE STUDENT'S COMMITTEE**

The student and the dissertation chair, will list members whom the student has determined would be willing to serve on his/her committee. This list will be forwarded to the Doctoral Chair, who may propose additional or alternative members as appropriate. The final decision about composition will be negotiated by the student, Advisor, and the Doctoral Chair. The Doctoral Chair approves the committee members and chairs with approval by the Graduate School.

Replacements or additions of committee members can be made at any time with the approval of the Doctoral Chair and the Graduate School.

## OTHER REQUIREMENTS

### RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE

#### **Credit and Residence Requirements**

Individual program credit hour requirements are established by the student's academic program and must be satisfied. Doctoral students are required to complete a minimum residence credit of four full semesters, either by full-time registration, or by part-time registration over several semesters. At least two of the required four semesters of residence must be earned in contiguous registration of no fewer than six credit hours at UNC-Chapel Hill. While summer session registration is not required to maintain consecutive registration, any credits of three to six hours per session will be computed on the usual basis as part of the required two-semester contiguity.

<http://handbook.unc.edu/phd.html#credit>

#### **Application for a Degree**

Each student must apply for a graduate degree for a specific graduation by the deadline shown in the Calendar of Events (please note that applying is a two-step process) found at:

<http://gradschool.unc.edu/graddeadlines.html>

Each academic program determines at what point a student must fulfill language or research skill requirements, provided that all such requirements are satisfied before a student is admitted to candidacy. The student's director of graduate studies will need to certify on the Application for Admission to Candidacy and the Application for Graduation that all such requirements have been met.

<http://gradschool.unc.edu/pdf/wdcanfrm.pdf>

[http://cfx.research.unc.edu/grad\\_appOnline/](http://cfx.research.unc.edu/grad_appOnline/)

#### **Time Limits** (<http://handbook.unc.edu/phd.html#timelimits>)

A doctoral student has eight calendar years from the date of first registration in the doctoral program to complete the doctoral degree. A student admitted to a master's program and later given formal permission to proceed to the doctoral degree has eight calendar years from the date of receipt of the master's degree to complete the doctoral degree. Reapplication is required to continue pursuit of the degree if the eight-year limit expires.

# ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM

## DOCTORAL CHAIR

The function of the doctoral chair is to provide overall management of the development and implementation of the doctoral program, chair Doctoral Program Committee (DPC) meetings, represent the doctoral program in the university and at national conferences, and coordinate all the activities of the doctoral program.

## DOCTORAL PROGRAM COMMITTEE

A Doctoral Program Committee has the following functions, as defined in Article 6.9 of the Faculty Bylaws.

"6.9 The Doctoral Program Committee provides leadership, establishes standards, and initiates activities for the overall planning, development and coordination of the School's Ph.D. Program.

### **6.91 Functions**

The functions of the Doctoral Program Committee shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Formulating recommendations to the Faculty regarding overall doctoral program policies and procedures;
- Engaging in activities concerning doctoral program publicity and student recruitment;
- Formulating recommendations to the Faculty, through the Curriculum Committee, on matters related to degree requirements, curriculum, and standards;
- Reviewing applications for admission and making admission recommendations to the Graduate School.

### **6.92 Membership**

The Doctoral Program Committee shall consist of the following:

- The Chairperson(s) of the Doctoral Program; three additional faculty members, at least two of whom are currently teaching in the program; two students; and any additional members agreed upon. The Dean and Associate Dean(s) shall serve as ex officio members of the committee. Student members shall be accorded the right to vote in Committee deliberations. Except for the Chairperson(s) and the two Coordinators, other members of the Committee shall serve for overlapping two year terms. Vacancies shall be filled through appointment by the Dean, in consultation with the Chairperson(s) of the Doctoral Program." The Chair of the Doctoral Program shall be appointed by the Dean for a three year term, with the possibility of reappointment.

### ***6.93 Meetings***

The Doctoral Program Committee shall meet at least twice each semester, and on call by the Chairperson(s), who shall give appropriate notice of all meetings to each member on the Committee, specifying time, place, and agenda of the meeting. Doctoral Program Committee meetings shall be open to all members of the Faculty."

### ***6.94 Sub-committees***

The Doctoral Program Committee shall appoint various sub-committees it deems necessary to carry out its functions.

## **DOCTORAL PROGRAM COORDINATOR**

The Coordinator for the Doctoral Program is currently Brenda Vawter. She will answer questions, take messages, make sure you get information you need, and generally be your first point of contact about problems, forms, and procedural issues. She also coordinates many of the doctoral program functions. She can be reached at 962-6477 or by email: [bvawter@email.unc.edu](mailto:bvawter@email.unc.edu). Her office is 324-A.